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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to fill the void in staff development caused by declining school revenues, resource teachers will be used to increase the language arts and reading skills of teachers in two cooperating elementary school districts. Resource teachers will receive one day of release time per week to work directly in the classroom with their peers. The key to success will be the selection of the resource teachers. The selection committee will consist of a project director and two members of the curriculum council from each district. The teachers who are chosen will work together to develop the inservice program. This will be a pilot program and evaluation information will be compiled from many sources. Anticipated outcomes are: (1) increased networking; (2) improved teacher morale; (3) compliance with California's SB 813 in the areas of mentor teacher programs and inservice credit requirements; and (4) continued funding and expansion to other curriculum areas. This document includes a timeline for program implementation. This document was selected by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Task Force on Public Confidence as descriptive of a promising practice or exemplary project worthy of highlighting for the California educational community. (DC)

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OUTSTANDING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FORM

Name of School, District or Agency MT. VIEW / UNION SCHOOL DISTRICTS Grade Levels K-8
Address 220 VIEW STREET Telephone () _____
City MT. VIEW CALIF State _____ Zip 94041
Name of Contact Person Dr. Judith Ladner ACSA Region 8
Name of Course, Program, Project or Policy Project PEAK
Date of Operation of Program or Project 1984 Calendar year

In 300 words or less please describe your program specifically enough for others to follow. Please include your program's
(1) primary purpose (how it benefits students)
(2) participants (grade levels of students, professional staff, community persons, etc)
(3) evaluation data (if available)

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PROJECT PEAK
(PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE)

Background

During the past few years public school districts have been forced to make drastic cuts in support services to teachers and students because of declining revenues. In an effort to keep the cuts as far removed from the classroom as possible, curriculum support services such as coordinators, academic specialists in various subject areas, professional consultants, and other personnel have been virtually eliminated or are non-existent in most programs. Consequently, districts have not been able to provide the funds or resources to continually update staff in new ideas and new knowledge in the various curricular areas. Districts have had to rely on limited services of county offices of education, sparse professional staff development funds, and the ingenuity and creativity of district staff to provide inservice. Teachers have repeatedly requested additional resources, consultants, and trainers to work with them on an individual basis or to work with their schools on special projects. Unfortunately, funds were usually unavailable for these requests.

Philosophy

Recent bodies of research have shown that the most dramatic impact on staff development or inservice comes from ongoing and planned direct work with the teachers. Since districts are no longer able to provide personnel to work directly for an extended time with the school or a grade level, PROJECT PEAK is an effort to fill that void and to increase the reading and language arts skills of teachers--and ultimately children--in two districts. This would be accomplished by "resource teachers", one in the area of language arts and one in the area of reading, from each of two districts to do ongoing and planned direct work with their peers. These "resource teachers" will receive 30 days of release time for direct service to teachers and students in the classroom or at a school site level. The "resource teachers" will work together to plan inservice programs which will be conducted by individuals or in a team teaching mode. The working together will maximize the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and skills between the two districts, giving an outside perspective in addition to the in-district perspective on inservice. This is very important, since districts have not been able to hire outside consultants. The exchange program will also provide a nurturing atmosphere where the top talents of both districts will be utilized for minimum dollars to help infuse new ideas into both districts. Because the "resource teachers" will be highly respected teachers within their districts, there should be a high degree of receptivity among their peers. Practical ideas will be reinforced in both districts and correlated to reading and language arts textbook adoptions, curriculum development, and frameworks. PROJECT PEAK will impact 16 schools, approximately 6,700 students, and 310 teachers in grades kindergarten through eighth.

Peer Selection Process

The key to the success of PROJECT PEAK is the selection of the teachers. Criteria is established that allows resource teachers in Reading and Language Arts to share their knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm in directly helping other teachers in these areas (see Appendix A). The criteria for the resource teachers has been mutually agreed upon by the curriculum councils of both districts; there will be a joint selection committee. After resource teachers are selected, they will work together to develop their inservice program for both districts.

The selection committee will consist of: (1) the Project Director from each district and (2) two members of the Curriculum Council from each district. The selection committee will review candidate applications, interview candidates, and make final recommendations as to the resource teachers. These recommendations will be approved by the Curriculum Councils and the superintendents of each district.

Program Design and Implementation

After resource teachers are selected, they will work together to develop their inservice program for both districts. This exchange of academic knowledge will be utilized by grade levels, weekly ongoing workshops at a school, individual classrooms, and district-wide inservice to enhance the instruction of reading and language arts.

In order to implement the inservice program, the resource teachers will be granted an 80%/20% instructional schedule. Regular 20% (one day per week) team teachers will serve as substitutes for the resource teachers. Providing the same substitute for each teacher will ensure the ongoing continuity of the instructional program for the students when the resource teacher is away from the classroom.

The one day a week of release time will provide the resource teachers the opportunity to deliver inservice activities directly to teachers in the classroom environment. These activities will include, but not be limited to: modeling teaching techniques, demonstrating programs, presenting staff inservice workshops, classroom observations, and sharing new materials and practices with teachers. The on-site inservice program will be delivered by an individual or by a team of specialists. The credibility factor and the value of these on-site inservice experiences, delivered by peers, should prove to be highly accepted and of immense practical value to the teachers of both districts.

Timeline

September 1983	Review criteria and selection process for resource teachers with Curriculum Councils
October 1983	Hold information meetings. Advertise and accept applications for resource teachers.
November 1983	Conduct school needs assessment to determine primary and secondary needs of both total staff and individual teachers
December 1, 2, 1983	Interview candidates. Select two teachers from each district.
December 15, 1983	Interim report due to Whitney Education Foundation

Timeline (continued)

January 1984	Plan schedules/in-service of PROJECT PEAK
February or March 1984 through April 1985	Present in-service to individual grade levels, school staff
April 13, 1984	Interim report to Whitney Education Foundation
July 15, 1984	Final and financial report to Whitney Education Foundation
April, May 1985	Evaluate, refine pilot project

Evaluation/Monitoring

Because PROJECT PEAK is a new program and will serve as a pilot program, evaluation will be compiled from many sources: (1) resource teachers; (2) teacher participant evaluation to measure impact on school programs and on individual classroom projects (see Appendix B); (3) PROJECT PEAK program evaluation to determine (a) if needs were met and (b) effectiveness of program (see Appendix C); (4) Curriculum Councils; and (5) project directors.

Monitoring will be done on a regular ongoing basis with the project directors and the resource teachers. Evaluations will be reviewed by the participants so that refinements can be made whenever possible. Reports will be made to the Curriculum Councils by the resource teachers twice during the semester.

Program Outcomes

There are several anticipated program outcomes in addition to the direct service provided to the individual staffs and school sites in the areas of reading and language arts. Some of the anticipated outcomes are:

- (1) Networking--promising practices currently going on in classrooms will be shared with staffs and individuals.
- (2) Teacher morale--because teachers have requested the services of resource teachers, morale should receive a tremendous boost. In the past, morale has suffered because resources were not available to meet teacher requests in the in-service areas.
- (3) Since the concept of the mentor teacher has just been signed into law with the current passage of SB 813 and the reforms attached, these two districts would be pioneering a successful program of mentor type teachers that could be replicated in other districts. PROJECT PEAK is an opportunity to work out and refine a basic concept that could have a far-reaching educational impact.
- (4) Another reform from SB 813 is that teachers are required to take 150 hours of continuing credit every five years. The services of the resource teacher could motivate teacher participants to take formal classes in the areas of reading and language arts in order to upgrade their skills and to meet their renewal requirement.
- (5) PROJECT PEAK will be so successful that the districts will continue to fund the concept and expand into other academic areas such as science or math.